Appendix F

Scoping Packet

Scoping Summary
U.S. Route 34 Location Study
Gulfport to Monmouth
(F.A. 313)
Job No. P-94-030-95

Prepared for:
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District 4
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Appendix A Study Area

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AT&SF	Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe
CERCLIS	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
INHS	Illinois Natural History Survey
ISGS	Illinois State Geological Survey
km	kilometer
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NPL	National Priorities List
NRCS	Natural Resource and Conservation Service
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
UST	underground storage tank

1.0 Introduction

The proposed project consists of a location study to improve existing U.S. Route 34 from near Gulfport to the Monmouth area in Henderson and Warren Counties, Illinois (Appendix A). As part of this location study process, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are initiating a scoping process in anticipation of the need to prepare the appropriate environmental document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). This packet presents a synopsis of the conditions within the project corridor and generally outlines the proposed study approach.

The corridor within which this project is located can be defined as an approximately 2-kilometer (km) wide area in the vicinity of Gulfport, extending easterly along existing U.S. Route 34, and expanding to a 5-km wide area around Monmouth, Illinois (see Appendix A). This corridor was initially approved in 1970 and has been re-evaluated and found to be viable as part of this study.

The identified project corridor includes the communities of Gulfport, Gladstone, Biggsville, Kirkwood, and Monmouth, Illinois. The project corridor also crosses South Henderson Creek and its tributaries, and the floodplain of the Mississippi River.

2.0 Description of Existing U.S. Route 34

Roadways constitute the basic east-west transportation system component in the study area. U.S. Route 34 is the primary highway from the Mississippi River bridge at Gulfport through the Monmouth area. U.S. Route 34 is a continuous highway from Iowa across Illinois to the Chicago area. The primary north-south route serving the Monmouth area is U.S. Route 67. U.S. Route 67 is a continuous route through Illinois from the St. Louis, Missouri area through the Quad Cities area into Iowa. Secondary highways in the study area include Illinois Route 164 and Illinois Route 94 (see Appendix A). All of the primary and secondary U.S and State highways in the study area are two lane facilities with the exception of the portion of U.S. Route 34 from the U.S Route 67 interchange in Monmouth to Galesburg, a portion of U.S. Route 34 from east of Gulfport into Iowa, and U.S Route 67 from the Monmouth area south.

Numerous north-south and east-west township and county roadways provide service to local traffic in the study area. These roadways consist of varying width paved and unpaved surfaces that are intended for lower volume traffic and serve as collectors to the primary and secondary routes.

The study area is also served by railways. The Burlington Northern Railroad operates a freight and passenger rail line through the study area from Iowa, east through Gladstone, Biggsville, Kirkwood, and Monmouth. The AT&SF Railroad Company operates a freight and passenger rail line which traverses the southern limits of the study area through Fort Madison, Iowa and Galesburg, Illinois. Both of these rail lines are continuous through Illinois to the Chicago area.

There is one local airport in the study area. The Monmouth Municipal Airport, just north of the Monmouth is a general aviation airport which provides service to small private aircraft in the area. The only commercial airport with scheduled service near the study area is located in Burlington, Iowa. Small, isolated landing strips are also located in the project area, including the Seymor Landing Strip and the Corzat Landing Strip located south of U.S. Route 34 in the vicinity of Biggsville.

In addition to air service in the study area, interstate bus service is provided by some bus companies through the area.

An origin-destination study is being completed during the early phase of the location study to collect specific traffic data. The results from the origin-destination study will provide an indication of traffic characteristics such as vehicle flow patterns, composition by types of vehicles, and volumes of traffic on the primary routes in the study area.

3.0 Summary of Environmental Issues

3.1 Water Resources

Water resources of the project area will be investigated to identify surface and groundwater quantity and quality. This will include the identification of stream and river systems, waterbodies, floodways and regulatory floodplains. Particular water resources known to occur within the project vicinity include the Mississippi River (to the west), Henderson Creek, and its tributaries (see Appendix A). Water quality will be described from existing data sources whereas ecological communities will be characterized using existing data sources and limited sampling as needed.

3.2 Socio-Economic Issues

Much of the project area is characterized as rural development. The number of residential and commercial impacts is expected to be low with each of the project alternatives. Communities represented in the project area include Gladstone, Biggsville, Kirkwood and Monmouth. These communities support residents of the study area with services, educational institutions, employment, as well as manufacturing and retail industries.

Socio-economic conditions will be investigated by identifying existing and future land use (agricultural, recreational, residential, etc.), demographic profiles and trends including the relative distribution of low income and minority groups, community facilities and services, employment and income levels, and other indicators of socioeconomic conditions. In addition, park and recreational facilities that may represent 4(f) and 6(f) properties will also be identified.

Potential impacts to the existing and future socioeconomic conditions resulting from the proposed improvements will be evaluated by investigating both direct and indirect impacts including residential and commercial displacements, changes in community circulation and cohesion, services, and employment. In addition, an agricultural assessment will be performed that will include a consideration of prime/unique farmland or farmland that is of local or statewide importance, severances, remnants, adverse travel, landownership and operation, and productivity. Coordination will be conducted between the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

3.3 Natural Resources

3.3.1 Wetlands

Wetlands of the project area will be investigated by obtaining existing mapping [National Wetland Inventory, Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) wetland maps] coupled with field reconnaissance to identify those wetland resources not included in the existing databases. A detailed field delineation of jurisdictional wetlands will be conducted by the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) on the final study alternate(s) considered in the environmental document. Avoidance of wetland areas will be practiced wherever possible.

3.3.2 Threatened and Endangered Species

The potential occurrence of listed species within the project area will initially be determined by obtaining input from the IDNR Natural Heritage Database and through coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, potential habitat occurring within the project area will be identified as a result of detailed field reconnaissance. A detailed consideration of threatened and endangered species issues within the project corridor will be conducted by the INHS for the final study alternate(s) considered in the environmental document.

3.3.3 Ecological Resources

Ecological resources within the project area will be characterized qualitatively using existing information of record coupled with field reconnaissance. Ecological communities currently known to occur within the project corridor include those associated with agricultural areas, riparian corridors, woodlands, floodplain and prairie habitats. Rare or sensitive community types will be identified as part of the study process and avoided wherever possible. A tree survey will also be performed to inventory trees potentially affected by the final study alternate(s) considered in the environmental document.

3.4 Cultural Resources

A consideration of potential effects to cultural resources will incorporate the use of recorded data and Phase I surveys. Coordination will be conducted with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to identify previously discovered sites and those listed or eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, a Phase I architectural survey will be performed to identify potentially significant structures prior to the development of study alternatives. A Phase I archaeological survey will be performed on the final study alternate(s) considered in the environmental document.

3.5 Hazardous Waste

Hazardous or potentially hazardous waste sites will be identified within the project corridor by performing literature surveys and data searches. These searches will include identifying all Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLIS), underground storage tank (UST), leaking underground storage tank (LUST), National Priorities List (NPL) and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) sites in addition to active and inactive landfills. A detailed consideration of potential hazardous waste issues within the study corridor will be conducted by the Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) for the final study alternate(s) considered in the environmental document.

3.6 Geological Resources

General geological characteristics of the project corridor will be characterized and summarized. This characterization will include a consideration of public water supplies, sole source aquifers, groundwater protection areas, and past or present mining or quarrying operations.

3.7 Noise

The proposed project may alter present noise levels for existing receptors along the route due to changes in traffic patterns. Areas where traffic generated noise is expected to increase include areas currently not adjacent to the existing facility and areas that may be located in proximity to alignments on new location. Receptors within these areas consist primarily of single family residential units. Also, existing receptors such as residences, schools, churches, etc. which are located along the existing roadway may be expected to experience some incremental increase in noise levels.

In order to assess the potential magnitude of impact associated with this project, a STAMINA 2.0 analysis will be conducted for the selected areas of residential concentrations along proposed new alignments and at other sensitive receptors that are identified.

4.0 Public Involvement

An active and on-going public involvement program has been developed for this project in order to convey information to, and obtain information from the people residing in the affected project area. This program includes the use of a wide variety of tools and techniques by which to derive public input. Some of the features of this program will include the establishment of a Focus Group, the issuance of a questionnaire, the development of a mailing list for use with periodic newsletters, public involvement meetings, and a public hearing.

Appendix A

Study Area